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# PRIDE PROM

**GLOSSARY**

We've put together a glossary of terminology and some best practices (Dos and Don'ts) to foster learning, growth and understanding about the LGBTQ and GNC community in an effort to help every person feel seen, safe and understood.

In the LGBTQ community, we acknowledge there is a tremendous amount of emotional capital that goes into constantly having to explain your gender expression, pronouns, sexuality, etc. If someone is actively volunteering to talk about these issues, please take it upon yourself to engage them and do your own research online at one of the many organizations that support the community, such as GLSEN, Trevor Project, GLAAD and the Human Rights Campaign.

Most important, if you make a mistake, it is best to acknowledge your mistake, apologize quickly and take steps to address the misstep. Awareness is the first step toward change.

The following are some best practices as far as Do's and Don'ts.

## DO'S & DON'TS

### DO

- Address people without assuming gender or pronouns.
- Introduce yourself with your preferred gender pronouns so other people feel safe doing the same
- Use all-gender language for crowds and individual people, like “esteemed guests,” “folks,” “friends,” “colleagues,” “participants,” “panelists,” “peers.”
- Take LGBTQ+ people and their concerns seriously, even if you do not understand the specifics.
- Think about whether your space is gendered — are there all-gender bathrooms or signage to indicate that people of all genders are welcome?
- Treat everyone, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, with respect and politeness.

## DO NOT

- Assume a person's gender identity based upon their appearance.
- Expect that because you cannot visually identify anyone in a room as transgender that there are no transgender people present; there most likely are. Best to approach every room as if there are.
- Focus on mistakes; apologize quickly and take steps to address the misstep.
- Ask invasive or personal questions about anyone, regardless of well-intended curiosity. People are entitled to their personal privacy and asking questions about personal information (gender history, body parts, sexual activity) is inappropriate, always and especially in professional settings.

**ABLEISM** *Noun.* The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have mental, emotional and physical disabilities.

**ALLY** *Noun.* Someone who supports equal civil rights, gender equality, and LGBTQ social movements, advocates on behalf of others, and challenges discrimination.

**ASEXUAL, OR ACE** *Adjective.* Someone who experiences little or no sexual attraction, or who experiences attraction but doesn't feel the need to respond to it sexually. Many people who are asexual still identify with a specific sexual orientation.

**BINARY** *Noun.* The belief that something has only two distinct, opposite, and disconnected forms. In terms of gender identity, the belief that only male and female genders exist. As a rejection of this belief, many embrace a gender nonconforming or non-binary gender identity.

**BISEXUAL, OR BI** *Adjective.* Someone who is attracted to those of their same gender, as well as to those of a different gender (e.g., a woman who is attracted to both women and men). Sometimes used as an umbrella term to describe individuals that are attracted to more than one gender. In this way, the term is closely related to pansexual or omnisexual, meaning someone who is attracted to people of any gender identity.

**CISGENDER, OR CIS** *Adjective.* A person whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth.

**CISNORMATIVITY** *Noun.* The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is cisgender and that cisgender people are superior to transgender people. This leads to invisibility of non-cis identities.

**CISSEXISM/GENDERISM** *Noun.* The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression falls outside of cisnormative constructs. This system is founded on the belief that there are and should be only two genders, and that one's gender or most aspects of it are inevitably tied to assigned sex. Within cissexism, cisgender people are the dominant/agent group and trans/gender nonconforming people are the oppressed/target group.

**COMING OUT** *Verb, Noun.* The process through which a person accepts their sexual orientation and/or gender identity as part of their overall identity. For many, this involves sharing that identity with others, which makes it more of a lifetime process, rather than just a one-time experience.

**CROSS-DRESSER** *Noun.* Someone who wears clothes associated with a different gender as a form of gender expression. Cross-dressers may not wish to present as a different gender all the time. (NOTE: Avoid using the term “transvestite.”)

**CULTURAL HUMILITY** *Noun.* An approach to engagement across differences that acknowledges systems of oppression and embodies the following key practices: (1) a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique; (2) a desire to fix power imbalances where none ought to exist; and (3) an aspiration to develop partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others on a systemic level. (Melanie Tervalon & Jann Murray-García, 1998)

**DEADNAMING** *Noun.* Occurs when someone, intentionally or not, refers to a person who is transgender by the name they used before they transitioned.

**DRAG** *Adjective, Noun.* The act of presenting as a different gender, usually for the purpose entertainment (e.g., drag kings and queens). Many who do drag may not wish to present as a different gender all the time.

**DRAG KING** *Noun.* A person (often a woman) who appears as a man. Generally in reference to an act or performance. This has no implications regarding gender identity.

**DRAG QUEEN** *Noun.* A person (often a man) who appears as a woman. Generally in reference to an act or performance. This has no implications regarding gender identity.

**DYKE** *Noun.* Referring to a masculine-presenting lesbian. While often used derogatorily, it is also reclaimed affirmatively by some lesbians and gay women as a positive self-identity term.

**FATPHOBIA** *Noun.* The fear and dislike of fat people and the stigmatization of individuals with bigger bodies.

**GAY** *Adjective.* Someone who is attracted to those of their same gender. Often used as an umbrella term, but is used more specifically to describe men who are attracted to men. (NOTE: Avoid using the term “homosexual.” Due to the term’s clinical history, many feel that the word suggests that gay people are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered.)

**GENDER AFFIRMATION SURGERY** *Noun.* Medical procedures that some individuals elect to undergo to change their physical appearance to more closely resemble their gender identity. (NOTE: Avoid using inaccurate phrases, such as “sex change,” “gender reassignment surgery,” and “pre-” or “post-operative.” In general, avoid overemphasizing surgery when discussing trans people or the process of transition.)

**GENDER EXPANSIVE** *Adjective.* An umbrella term used for individuals who broaden their own culture’s commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender expansive individuals include those who identify as transgender, as well as anyone else whose gender is in some way seen to be stretching the surrounding society’s notion of gender.

**GENDER EXPRESSION** *Noun.* The external manifestations of gender, expressed through names, pronouns, clothing, behavior, voice and more.

**GENDER IDENTITY** *Noun.* One’s internal, deeply held sense of gender. Some people identify completely with the gender they were assigned at birth, while others may identify with only a part of that gender, or not at all. Some identify with another gender entirely. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others.

**GENDER NONCONFORMING** *Adjective.* Someone whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not conform to the cultural or social expectations of male or female gender. This can be an umbrella term for many identities, including but not limited to:

**AGENDER** (or neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless) — Someone who has little or no personal connection with gender.

**GENDER-FLUID** — Someone whose gender identity and/or expression varies over time.

**PANGENDER** — Someone whose identity is comprised of all or many gender identities and expressions.

**THIRD GENDER** — Someone who does not identify with either male or female, but with another gender. This gender category is used by both

contemporary and historical societies that recognize three or more genders. It is also a conceptual term meaning different things to different people who use it, as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

**HETERONORMATIVITY** *Noun.* The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual (e.g., asking a woman if she has a boyfriend) and that heterosexuality is superior to other sexualities. This leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities.

**HOMOPHOBIA** *Noun.* A range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure or discomfort) toward members of the LGBTQ community, including a fear, disgust or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ.

**INTERSECTIONALITY** *Noun.* The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

**INTERSEX** *Adjective.* Someone who has reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit the typical definitions for female or male. Some people who are intersex may identify with the gender assigned to them at birth, while others may not.

**LATINX** *Adjective.* Pronounced “La-TEEN-ex,” it is a non-gender specific way of referring to people of Latin American descent. Other commonly known ways of referring to people of Latin American descent are Latinos, Latina, Latin@, Latino. The “x” at the end replaces “o” and “a,” which are gendered suffixes. It moves beyond terms like Latino/a and Latin@, which still reinforce a gender binary.

**LESBIAN** *Adjective, Noun.* A woman who is attracted to other women. Some lesbians prefer to identify as “gay women.”

**LGBT+** *Adjective.* The acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.” The plus sign represents communities that expand the acronym to include other identities. For example, while it is common in the U.S. to see “LGBTQ” (for queer and/or questioning), it is more common to see “LGBTI” (for intersex) in Europe.

**MISGENDERING** *Verb.* Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect/does not align with their gender identity. Can occur when using pronouns, gendered language (i.e., “Hello, ladies!” “Hey, guys”), or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify (i.e., “Well, since we’re all women in this room, we understand ...”).

**NONBINARY** *Adjective.* A gender identity and experience that embraces a full universe of expressions and ways of being that resonate for an individual. It may be an active resistance to binary gender expectations and/or an intentional creation of new unbounded ideas of self within the world. For some people who identify as nonbinary, there may be overlap with other concepts and identities, such as “gender expansive” and “gender nonconforming.”

**PANSEXUAL, OR PAN** *Adjective.* A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical and/or spiritual attraction to members of any gender identity/expression.

**PRIDE** *Noun.* The celebration of LGBTQ identities and of the global LGBTQ community’s resistance against discrimination and violence. Pride events are celebrated in many countries around the world — usually during June, to commemorate the Stonewall Riots in New York City in 1969, a pivotal moment in the Gay Liberation movement in the 1960s and ’70s, as well as modern LGBTQ history.

**QUEER** *Adjective.* In a very basic sense, anyone who is not heterosexual and/or cisgender. In the past, “queer” was a negative or pejorative term for gay people, so it is sometimes disliked. But the term is increasingly valued by many LGBTQ people for its defiance and inclusiveness.

**QUESTIONING** *Adjective, Verb.* When someone questions or experiments with their gender expression, gender identity and/or sexual orientation. This experience is unique to everyone; for some, it can last a lifetime or be repeated many times over the course of a lifetime.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION** *Noun.* The desire one has for emotional, romantic and/or sexual relationships with others based on their gender expression and/or gender identity. Many people choose to label their sexual orientation, while others do not.

**STRAIGHT OR HETEROSEXUAL** *Adjective.* A word to describe women who are attracted to men and men who are attracted to women. This is not exclusive to those who are cisgender. For example, some trans men identify as straight because they are attracted to women.

**THEY/THEM/THEIR** *Pronouns.* One of many sets of gender-neutral singular pronouns that can be used as an alternative to he/him/his or she/her/hers.

**TRANSGENDER, OR TRANS** *Adjective.* Someone whose gender identity differs from the one that was assigned to them at birth. Many trans people identify as either male or female, while others may identify as gender nonconforming or queer. How transgender people choose to express their gender is individualistic, as are their transitions. (NOTE: Avoid using “transgender” as a noun, as in “a transgender,” or with an -ed on the end, as in “transgendered”; avoid using “transsexual,” as this is an older term that originated in the medical and psychology fields.)

**TRANSITION** *Noun.* The process through which some transgender people change their gender expression to more closely resemble how they view their gender identity. This can include personal, medical and legal steps, such as using a different name and/or pronouns, dressing differently, changing one’s name and/or gender on legal documents, undergoing hormone therapy and/or having gender affirmation surgery. Some trans people may choose not to make these changes or may only make a few. The experience is an individual one; there is no right or wrong way to transition.

**TRANSPHOBIA** *Noun.* A range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure or discomfort) toward trans people. Transphobia is often manifested violently, as transgender people are far more likely than their cisgender peers (including LGB people) to be the victims of violent hate crimes, including murder. This hatred and lack of acceptance also contributes to a high rate of depression and suicide among trans people.



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